

NUMISMATIC CURIOSITIES.

High Prices for Rare Coins and Medals—A Silver Dollar Valued at \$1,000.

Somebody recently started a false report that the American silver dollars coined in 1878 were worth \$2 each, in consequence of their scarcity and the efforts of coin collectors to secure them. The result was that dealers in coins were deluged with offers to sell specimens of that coin and with inquiries as to whether the report was true. Some time ago a similar story was circulated with reference to the coins of cents in the United States Mint in 1814. It was alleged that in that year there was a dishonest workman, who was detected in the act of stealing a quantity of gold. In order to screen himself from punishment and dispose of the evidence of his crime, he buried three coins of gold into a crucible of molten copper that he was passing. The story ran that the workman's secret had become known, and that the pennies of 1814 were being bought up to extract the gold from them.

Some idea of the extensive interest taken in the collection of coins and medals may be gathered from the fact that in the year 1880 there were 1,000 persons of coin collecting in the city of New York alone. The total value of the sales was about \$50,000. When to this is added the sales by regular dealers the total value of the sales of coins and medals foots up \$100,000 a year. Besides the Numismatic Society of New York, of which Prof. Anthon is President, which has been ten years in existence, there are lesser societies in other cities and there is a growing interest in the subject. The literature of the subject is extensive, and a collector's journal is published in this country. And it is to be observed that the names of more than 20,000 persons in the United States who are interested in numismatic matters. Some of these persons are dealers in coins and certain pieces which they need to complete collections. The traffic is so extensive that there is a great variety in value, and in demand, and even a difference in price for different states of preservation. The wear and tear of age reduces the value of a coin because it becomes less rare and less valuable as it becomes less scarce. Thus it is not infrequently happens that one impression of a coin may be worth twice as much as another impression of the same coin.

Looking over a large collection the other day, the reporter asked: "What is the oldest coin you have?"

Here is an Egin coin dating 700 years before Christ. It is a dirachma, and was a very common coin. It is not worth \$100.

"Or is it a man's antique? How is that? Does not a coin become more valuable according to its age?"

How is it? It is rare and in demand, as well as old. Many old coins are comparatively plentiful. Here are coins at least 2,000 years old, that can be bought for 75 cents.

How do you know they are genuine?"

By the same tests that manuscripts and documents are tested, the fact of all kinds are identified. There are some not only in New York, but in Philadelphia, Boston, Pittsburgh, and other places, where they make a trade in authenticating an ancient coin than any other object of antiquity."

Has not the name of the person of the widow mentioned in the Scripture?"

"Yes; they are not very scarce. Here is a coin issued by Pontius Pilate."

No there would be no means of identifying them, unless they were found in the possession of the silver for which Judas betrayed his Master was coined money. The progress of the art of coining is a fair index of the progress of civilization. The first coins were made in 1800 to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the independence of Belgium.

The silver was coined in the portrait of Ferdinand III, and his wife.

The original value was \$2; it is now worth \$15.

That is the cost of coins of 1802.

Is the silver dollar of 1804 worth \$15?"

The silver dollar of 1804 is worth \$15.

Is the half-dollar of 1794 worth \$25?

Is the half-dollar of 1836 worth \$100?

Is the half-dollar of 1837 worth \$100?

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